

TO THE
ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER.

LETTER II.

On the State of the Press in England.—On the projects of the Borough-Usurpers for destroying the press and juries in England.—On the Trials of Mr. Hone.—On the choice of a member, or members, at the next election for Westminster.

North Hampstead, Long Island,
15th March, 1818.

GENTLEMEN,

In a former letter, which I did myself the honour to address to you on the 13th of November last, I endeavoured to impress on your minds a strong sense of the necessity of your now acting a very firm and independent part as to the choice of Members. A continuation of this important subject is what I now intend; but, as I am convinced, that the *Borough-Usurpers* and the *Press* cannot long co-exist, I cannot refrain from first endeavouring to draw your attention to the state of the press and to the projects which are on foot for its total destruction in England.

It was very clear, long ago,

that the Press, or the Borough-usurpation, must, one or the other, be destroyed. The last fought to save itself by the gagging bills and dungeon Bill. The tyrants hatched all sorts of pretences for preventing the people's reading about politics, at the very moment when they were making such a noise about their desire to teach the people to read! The dungeon and the gag did much in the way of frightening, but nothing at all in the way of converting: on the contrary, the enactment of them only confirmed men in their opinion, that the cause of Reform was built on truth and justice. It was impossible not to perceive, that it was the press, of which the usurpers became most afraid in the early part of 1817. The press had just then assumed a new character; or, rather, it had just betaken itself to a new mode of exerting itself; a new distribution of power had taken place amongst its several branches. As long as the chief part of its great power remained in the hands of the two factions of borough-usurpers, these gentlemen gave themselves but little concern about the matter; but, at the period alluded to, the press took a new turn, and the people

had their share of its influence fairly afforded them. This puzzled the Usurpers. They saw that the great arm of *moral* force had passed away from them. Their bribery was of no use. That which had never failed them before, failed them now. All their stamping tricks; all their post-office tricks; all their tricks of every description became of no avail. Their hired pens were of no more use than so many skewers. The people *read*, and they read truths never to be forgotten.

In this situation they resorted to *physical* force, for even talking of which they have so much abused others. Very willingly would they have imposed a *Censorship* at once; but, that must have included *publications of all sorts*, which effect it did not suit their views to produce. To single out any particular writer *by name* would have been to acknowledge him to be the *one man*, to whom the people ought to look: it would have been to exalt him to the skies, and to plunge themselves headlong into the deepest deep of infamy. Besides, the *name* would have *changed*. Their grasp would have been eluded. They therefore resorted to nominally *general* measures, though their object was *particular*. Their object was to stop my pen principally; but they dared not to *say so*. The *dungeon*, therefore, was opened ready to receive me and any of my readers. They never intended it

for any other purpose. By the step which I took, this purpose was, in great part, defeated. They saw the dreaded "Cheap Trash" revive, while, to their inexpressible mortification, they saw not the smallest chance of putting a stop to it. They found, that, so far from having silenced the main battery against them, the fire became more galling than ever, and that the character of the publisher, who was acting his part with so much fidelity*, gave them no hope of repose.

This was the state, in which they found themselves last October; and then it was that they began to think seriously of resorting to the *Censorship* in the true Bourbon style and manner. It was announced in the *Sun* and the *Courier*, from *authority*, that a *Supervision* of the Press was to be established. The *regular opposition* writers were informed, that *they* need not be alarmed; for, that it was not intended to meddle with them. Soon after this, the notorious *Colonel Fletcher*, of Bolton in Lancashire, gave, as a toast at a public dinner: "May 'the licentiousness of the press' be *speedily regulated by the Legislature*." This man's character and office need not be described. His name need not be inserted in the "*People's memo-*

* Other merits are here ascribed by the Author to the Publisher, but the latter, not being sure of his title to them, thinks it right to leave them out.

"*random Book.*" His deeds will never be forgotten. I have no doubt that this man was *instructed*, nay *ordered*, to feel the pulse of those of his part of the country.

From these circumstances, it is very clear, that the design was fully entertained at the period, to which I allude. It would appear, from more recent intelligence, that there have arisen some doubts on the subject, in the minds of the borough-usurpers and their infamous agents. But, to this it must come, or the usurpers will be speedily overthrown and the king and people will have their rights. I have frequently said this, and I now repeat it with more confidence than ever. Yet, a *Censorship* is a thing very difficult to manage. I am aware, that it might be made to operate so particularly as to leave such a man as *Perry* wholly unshackled. His labours are all for the usurpers. But, the *look* of the thing is so ugly. The *naked Censorship* is so very ugly a thing! The intended measure was, probably, to vest the decision, in cases of libel, solely in Judges, or other persons, appointed by the Crown, and to leave *juries* aside in such cases. This would have been neither more nor less than a revival of the *Court of Star-Chamber*, the proceedings in which contributed so largely towards the bringing of Charles the First to the block. When I say, "*would have been*", let me not be under-

stood to mean, that it *will not* be; for I am thoroughly convinced, that something of the kind *will be done*, or, at least, attempted, before the present Revolution is half over; unless, which I do not expect, the usurpers should resign the seats to be filled in a constitutional way by the free voice of the people.

It is nonsense to suppose, that *quiet* will grow out of prosperity; for such prosperity cannot arise out of the present system. No man in his senses ever thought, that the *starvation* would be as great after a plentiful harvest as after a scanty harvest. There will also be little *ups* and *downs* in trade and commerce; but, on an *average* the state of the country will, in these respects, continue to be the same. The *talk* about distress will be less; for people get tired of talk in time. And, besides, it will be found, and has been found, that there is no benefit in talking about the thing. General pauperism is become familiar to the eye and the ear. Objects of misery and tales of woe no longer affect people. The starved creatures die silently in general; those who are able to keep life in them regard themselves as fortunate; and any thing approaching a full meal is deemed a luxury.

This is a state of things which might last very long were it not for that Debt, of which the borough-usurpers have contracted to pay the interest. Were it not for

this Debt, they might go on, keeping up a strong force, till they had reduced the English nation to the same state that the French nation was in before that Revolution, which, after all that has happened, has greatly benefitted that nation. But our tyrants have a *Debt*, and thank God they have a Debt, the interest of which they must continue to pay in full, or their usurpations cannot last; and, I am certain, that they cannot continue to do this for any length of time. Indeed they do not do it now out of the taxes that they raise. They *borrow* every year to pay *one third part* of the interest. They *hope*, but they hope in vain, that they shall be able to *raise more* than they now raise. If they cannot do this, they are done for. This much they have just the sense to know, and their fears correspond with this their knowledge. For many years, they had no idea of this matter. Now they have, and it is this, and this alone, which operates as a check on their contempt of the people. They have, at times, their *misgivings*. They get, now and then, a glimpse at their danger. If they had sense sufficient to comprehend how great that danger really is, it would be better for them; then they, surely, would endeavour to avert it by ceasing to oppress and insult the nation.

It is very true, that, by means of the Debt, that is to say, by the means of *loans*, they have crushed

freedom in France and also at home. They have restored the Bourbons and have retained their own usurpations; but, by the very same means, they have placed the Bourbons and themselves in *greater jeopardy than ever*. Nothing is more uncertain than the *paper credit*. It depends merely upon *opinion*. If, for instance, Oliver had not been a Spy; if a real rebellion, or resistance, by twenty or forty thousand men under the Nottingham Captain, had lasted for only *ten days*; what, I ask, would have become of the *Paper-money*? If his army, increasing like a snowball, had got as far as Coventry, does any man believe, that a pound-note would have bought a pot of porter in London? And, if only one regiment, ordered against the insurgents, had refused to fire on them, would any one but a mad-man have given a silver sixpence for all the bank notes and all the stock in the kingdom? Yet, that such events are *possible*, and even, in some degree, probable, the Boroughmongers themselves must allow; else why such terrible laws to prevent the people from communicating with the soldiers? What are we to think, then, of men, who have reduced the establishments of the country to this perilous state? Men who have hung the whole frame of society upon a thread? Away would go, in a twinkling, all contracts, all pecuniary obligations;

for, as to payments in *coin*, where is the man so mad as to think it possible? An insurrection, to produce this tremendous effect, need not be successful; for the consequence of the panic would be the same, in this respect, as those of a complete conquest of the country by a foreign enemy. Only think of the confusion, the misery, the violences, that would instantly ensue! Who would pay a debt? Who would part with food, or raiment, or lodging, but for *coin*? How could the *markets* be supplied? How could *London* be fed? What would become of any set of men cordially detested by the people?

This is a danger created by the borough-usurpers themselves. The danger would be great enough, under any circumstances, what must it be, then, under circumstances like the present! The Borough gentlemen, in their sweet dreams about dungeons, halters and axes, appear to overlook their great enemy, the Paper-money, the existence of which renders their possessions not worth in fee seven years purchase. They, wise and honest gentlemen, employ their time in inventing false accusations against the people, and in sending out spies and scouts to entrap and kill them. If Lawyer Cross could have told them *what to do* in case of any occurrence like those above supposed, he would, indeed, have rendered them a service: as it is, he has only assisted to augment the mass of com-

bustible feeling, of which they will, one day or other, experience the terrible effect; that is to say, unless they give up to the people those just and lawful rights which they now withhold from them.

When the borough-usurpers, armed with gags, halters, and axes, marched forth against the nation, they forgot they left their Paper-Money in their rear, or, rather, that they had in their very ranks this worst of enemies, who was ready to follow and co-operate with them as long as they were prosperous, but who was ready to leave them, as the perfidious Austrians and Bavarians were Napoleon, the moment the continuance of that prosperity became doubtful. If they had had a thousandth part as much sense as they have cruelty, they would have, long ago, taken effectual measures to get rid of this most dangerous ally. But, yet, they could not then have re-enslaved France and prevented a Reform in England.

The situation of the borough-usurpers is, as you will clearly see, very different from what it would be if there were a *gold and silver currency* and *no Debt*. In that case, a commotion, however serious, would be an affair of *fighting*. Purchases and sales would go on; debts would be paid; contracts would remain; food and raiment would be obtained; the markets would be supplied except in the immediate vicinity of warlike scenes; and, the commotion put down, things would resume their

former course. Not so in the present case of the boroughmongers, who, instead of being powerful from the possession of what they call money, would become weak in proportion to the amount of that possession. They have gigantic powers while that money is *believed in*; but, let the belief be once staggered, and they drop as in a fit.

Let them rave, then. Let them invent *Censorships* and *Supervisions* of the press. Let them believe, that, by preventing the people from *reading*, they shall prevent them from *thinking*. Let LORD MILTON, the sublime, hold aloft his head, and shut his wise eyes, like the cock in Dryden's fable. Let him boast of his victory over Mr. BENBOW and FRANCIS WARD. And let us hope to live to see the day, when those brave and honest men will be allowed to "come to close quarters" with the sublime personage upon terms somewhat more equal than at present exist. Let us hope, that the day is to come, when it will be matter of *legal inquiry*, who it was that advised the giving of sixty thousand pounds of the people's money to the prostituted Burke, and who are those *executors*, of that hack, who *still receive* his posthumous pension.

All these dangers the borough-mongers see at *glimpses*; but, they have no settled and determined opinion about them. The first thought that strikes every fool in difficulty is that of falling on vio-

lently upon the *immediate cause* of his peril. He never looks back to the original cause and endeavours patiently to remove that. So it has been, and is, with our usurpers. They ascribe their dangers to *the press*, instead of the misrule, of which the press complains. They, therefore, leave that misrule unaltered and endeavour to silence the press, the measures they have taken for which are really so ridiculous, that all the wickedness of them almost disappears, when we think of the former characteristic. They have, in these endeavours, been, however, singularly favoured, for many years, *by the press itself*. I do not mean solely by their own *hired* part of the press, but, by that part also, which has had pretensions to public spirit. *Something else* has here been at work as busily and as malignantly, if not more malignantly, than *Corruption* has been in the other part. I do not allude to the *Whig* part of the press; for that is as much Corruption's as is the *Courier* and the *Sun* themselves. The Whig press is, in fact, the hireling of one half of "*the Regiment*." I allude to that part of the press, which professes to be for *Reform*, and which has, almost without an exception, been hostile to the author of those writings, which, at last, pushed the borough-mongers to the shameful extremity of making a Revolution. I do not know in what manner it is, that I have so deeply

wounded all these writers. I have, I am sure, never given any of them any offence personally: for, I have never been personally acquainted with any one of them: *I never saw any one of them in my whole life, except one at Liverpool.* My public endeavours they cannot think reprehensible: because, in all my main objects they profess to agree with me. It is not to be believed, that they can have imbibed a hatred of me on account of *my writings being read more than theirs.* They can hardly grudge me the honour of having driven Corruption to draw her dagger; for, if I have the honour, I have the inconvenience and the danger attending it. They can hardly be so unjust as this: and, yet, it is very certain, that the far greater part of them do act as if they longed for an occasion of cutting my throat: or, at least, of announcing my death; which would be something in their regular way of trade.

They, however, as well as the borough-usurpers, do not appear to see what a *change* the times have made. They do not appear to perceive, that *the people* are no longer to be misled or stopped. They forget, that *two millions of Registers* are in the hands of the people. They forget, that the impression made by these is too deep to be ever effaced. I saw a very decent and pretty English woman, at Philadelphia, a few weeks ago. She had heard, that I was in that city. She begged to be permitted to see me, to thank me for the information she had received from the Register. She had seen the "*Peep into the Den*" before she left England. "Lord, Sir!" said she, "till we had your little books, we knew nothing. I never had a thought

"that there were *women* and *children pensioners*; and I never thought, that it was *we* who paid such people. I knew, that, with all our working and scratching, we got poorer and poorer: but I never knew *what it was that made us so.*" She said, that she liked England and English people best: but, that she liked to have *enough to eat and to wear.* Which, indeed, she might now, for her husband, who was a hatter, earned *eight dollars a week*, while beef was about *three pence English money* a pound. "Never dreamt," she exclaimed, "that *we* paid such parcels of *women and children*, while we ourselves were starving!—And only think, Sir," she continued, "of their wanting to prevent poor people from *marrying and having children!*" She had got the "*little book*" in her pocket, and said that she was resolved to *keep it as long as she lived.*

This is the way in which I have worked. I have not been painting with a pencil or a brush; but have been working on the popular mind with a *graving tool.* And, are my fellow-labourers to hate me, because I have made deeper impressions than they? I am very well aware, that all attempts at *conciliation* are useless. When one has committed an *ordinary offence*, it is possible to conciliate by atonement. But my offence against "*the race that write*" is my being what I am. To reconcile them to me, I must become, weak, foolish, an idiot, or I must die, and, though I would go very far for the purpose of assuaging their anger, I really cannot think of going lengths like these. No! We must go on as we are going on. They must pursue their course, and I must pursue mine.

We shall, in the end, see who is right, and who wrong. In the meanwhile, however, it is truly laughable to observe the roundabout means, to which some of these gentlemen resort. One, at Liverpool, dislikes "political Leaders." He very much dislikes "political teachers." He likes, of all things, to see men, aspire to renown in the "arts and sciences;" but, he hates to see it in a "political writer;" though I do not know who told him, that, *politics* were not a *science*. His dislike to political *Leaders* and *teachers* appears to be quite equal to that of the borough-gentlemen themselves. He hates the *distinction* in *political writers*. "Hang those grapes," said the Fox, "they are nasty sour things;" but, the fable does not say, that Reynard discovered any malignity against his brethren, who were able to jump high enough to get the grapes.

The Trials of Mr. HONE, have produced excellent effects. He is fully worthy of all the praise that has been bestowed upon him for every part of his conduct, as far as I have seen any account of it. There are many circumstances, attending these trials, which are worthy of particular attention. The folly of the Attorney General is almost passing belief. I said, in the "*Peep into the Den*," that though a Lord Chancellor, a Chief Justice, or an Attorney General, might, by bare possibility, be an infamous villain, it was impossible for him to be a fool. I am inclined now to retract this last assertion; and to think, that a Lawyer in Office, may, like the third person of Mr. HONE's *Trinity*, be "*perfect knave and perfect fool*." I

* See the *Liverpool Mercury*, October 8, 1817.

thought the *stamp-law*, which brother Shepherd discovered against my Twopenny Pamphlet was bad enough; but this attempt on Mr. HONE beats it hollow. He sunk below Mr. HONE from the outset. The latter dealt with him most roundly all through; but, the making him beg pardon for having *taken the name of God in vain*; and making him cant so sweetly; this was the best part of the thing, as far as related to "*Mr. Attorney*." The Judge did not fare much better, especially their Chief Judge, who appears to have been ready to choke in his own gall and foam. The rap-, which Mr. HONE gave him were not only good in themselves, but most judiciously applied. He beat him out of his *law*; but, I was sorry to perceive, that he missed giving him one blow, which would have levelled him for ever. When Mr. HONE was contending, that the *Athanasian Creed* was not formerly held as indispensable of belief, the Judge, though he had promised not to interrupt him, did interrupt him, and said it was made so by the *Act of Conformity*. Mr. HONE took occasion here to make a good remark or two: but, how sorry I was to see, that he forgot to show the Judge's *ignorance of the law*, by telling the Jury, that, as far as related to the *Athanasian Creed*, this Act and all other Acts of the sort, were *repealed*, in 1813, and that any one may now, according to law, *openly deny the doctrines of that Creed*, either in speaking or writing. Either the Judge was *ignorant* of this, or he *suppressed*, in his charge to the jury, the statement of the fact, *in order to produce a verdict against the defendant*. Let the "*learned Lord*," as the news-paper people call him, choose for himself here. As we

are contending for our right to choose our own Lawgivers, it would be hard to refuse him liberty to choose in this case, where he is so very deeply interested.

To dwell on the different incidents of these important trials would be endless and useless; but, I cannot help remarking with peculiar pleasure on the *slap*, which Mr. HONE dealt the slavish BAR. That degraded body, none of whom any man, pursued by the curs of the boroughmongers, can now trust. What a shame! Is this the *learned* profession of "the law?" Are these amongst the impudent tribes, who call the Labourers and Mechanics the "*peasantry*," the "*population*," the "*lower orders*!" This Bar may well, indeed, be called the "*lower order*," for, if we could find any thing lower, we must go at once to Turkey, Algiers, or the West Indies. If I am told, that Mr. HONE did not *try* the Bar, I answer, that he *dared* not. He, who lived in London, who knew the Bar well, and who had seen so many instances of its cowardice and perfidy, dared not *trust* it. To *try* it would, with him, have been to *trust* it. It would have been impossible for him to *stop*, when he found it false or cowardly. He must have kept on. He could not *try* it without *delivering himself up* into its hands. And very wisely did he act in not doing this. No barrister would have done what Mr. HONE himself did. No one would have taken the same excellent ground of defence. But, the *reason* he gave for distrusting the Bar was the best thing of all. He said, in plain terms, that, if any barrister had done his duty in defending him, such barrister would have *lost the ear of the Judges for ever after*! What a

thing to say! And to the faces of both barristers and Judges! But, what a thing to be said *with truth*!

Great complaints were made by the corrupt press about the *clamours* in the Court and in the Hall and avenues. The Attorney General and the Judge are said to have been insulted, and Mr. HONE is said to have been cheered, as also the juries for their verdicts of acquittal. This, says the *Courier*, is *something new* in England, where, he says, the "*sanctuary of the laws*" was always heretofore so much respected." Yes; and this was the *pride* of the country. But, it was when it was regarded as the *sanctuary of the laws*. The people now see no such sanctuary. They now see no laws to *protect* them; and how can they call that a *sanctuary of the laws*, which is retained in use only for the purposes of *punishment and vengeance*? These demonstrations of popular contempt and hatred are *something new*; and are not the absolute-power-of-imprisonment Act, the gagging Act, the Soldier's Act, the New Treason Act, *something new in England*? Is it not *something new in England* to see a man fined a thousand pounds and shut up in Newgate two years for complaining, that English Militia men had been flogged in the heart of England, under the guard of German bayonets and sabres? Is it not *something new in England* to see judges guarded by dragoons? To see the prisoners brought to the court by a standing army in time of Peace? Is not the employment of hired Spies and informers, to bring men to the block, *something new in England*? What! Do the borough-Gentlemen expect, then, that the people are to respect the laws made for *punishment*, when

the Laws made for *protection* are taken away? Oh, no! Let them remember, that LORD CLARENDON relates, that when, in the reign of the tyrant Stuarts, men once perceived, that *fair play* ceased to be found in the Courts of Justice, they made up their minds, that a total overthrow of the government was become necessary to their safety. Let the borough-gentlemen remember this, and let them sleep under it as comfortably as they can.

The COURIER ascribes the popular hatred and disrespect before mentioned to the old cause: the "*Two penny trash*." Poor "*Two-Penny Trash*" comes in for all the blame! Two-penny trash appears to be the same to these fellows as the Devil is to the parsons. Oh, no! Two-penny trash has nothing to do with the matter. It is the Seat Selling, the Sinecure and Pension List, the Standing Army in time of Peace, the Dungeon, the Gag, the Spies and Informers, and the vindictive prosecutions for libel. These are the things, which have had this effect upon the people, and not the poor Two-Penny Trash, which has only helped to explain the nature of these horrid means of oppression. When men think of Castlereagh and Melville and Pitt and Joseph Hunt and Steel and Cawthorne and hundreds of others: *aye hundreds*, and, on the other hand think of the poor Timman of Plymouth, do they want any writer, or orator, to fill them with indignation? When the people hear it proposed to make them *emigrate* and to prevent the working people from *marrying* and from breeding, upon the ground, that the Country is unable to maintain them, while, at the same moment they see endless lists of the nobility and their relations and

dependants, men, women and children, *pensioned* and living in idleness upon the very earnings of those working people: when the people hear and see these things, do they need Two-Penny Trash to make them think themselves ill used, and to make them wish for a change? Is it possible for them to need Two-penny Trash to make them hate every thing connected with such a system? The COURIER says, that, this contempt of the "*sanctuary*" of the laws, of the *seat of Justice*, "*is an alarming symptom*." So it is. It certainly is so; and it is so, because it is a proof, that the people do not any longer regard it as the seat of Justice. It is alarming to those who have made war upon the people: who have taken from them all protection for their very persons: who have placed every man and woman's body at the mere mercy of Sidmouth and Castlereagh. Very alarming to *them*, I allow; but very cheering to me; because it proves to me, that it is utterly impossible to deceive the people any longer, or to subdue their spirit and beat them down into contented slavery. There is a real war going on between the boroughmongers and the nation; and we have here a strong symptom, that the latter will finally triumph. The former have *force* on their side at present; "*physical force*;" but nothing is of so inconstant and precarious a nature. As to the *laws*, they have forfeited all claim to a right to appeal to them. They have made *one law for themselves* and *another law for the rest of the people*. This they have done *expressly*; in plain words they have done it; and yet (oh, impudence and folly!) they expect the people still to *reverence the laws*! And their hirelings talk of the "*Sanc-*

"*tuury* of the laws, and the *seat* "of Justice"! We shall have the Doctor, by and by, calling his Dungeons the Sanctuary of the laws and the Seat of Justice!

Who did not see, in the case of Mr. HONE, the object was to *punish* him? The object of *all* the parties? And who could help seeing, that the Judges did all they could to get him placed *at their mercy*? Did not both the Judges, especially Lord Ellenborough, *plead* for guilty; and almost *pray* for guilty? It was brave and it was most judicious in Mr. HONE to notice this, during the third day; and to express his hope, that the Jury would not suffer themselves to be *besecced* into a verdict of guilty. "The *sanctuary of the laws*," indeed! This was a pretty sanctuary, truly! The press of the borough-gentlemen exclaims:—"What! treat with contempt the *Lord Chief Justice of England*!" This is a fine sounding phrase, and it once had its charm; but, when the "Lord Chief Justice of England," who, the law says, ought to be of *counsel* for the prisoner, becomes assistant counsel for the Crown against the prisoner, and exhausts his very prayers to obtain a verdict of guilty: When this is the case, and when he suppresses the statement of a fact like that of the repeal of the penal laws regarding the Trinity, what signifies his sounding title of "*Lord Chief Justice of England*"? Is it not impudence unparalleled to expect that such conduct will be regarded with reverence?

But, indeed, who does not see, that it was, at bottom, no regard for the *Christian Religion*, or for *any Religion*, that led to the prosecution of Mr. HONE? The hypocrites cited the opinion of Judge Hale, "the pious *Lord Hale*," as they called him; who had called

Christianity "*part and parcel of the law of England*." A pretty expression, truly; a pretty doctrine! But, then, who is to say *what Christianity* is according to law, seeing, that laws have been passed to make a denial of the truth of the doctrine of the *Trinity blasphemy*, and that a law has since been passed to make such denial *not blasphemy*? What man will believe, that the Judge, "*the Lord Chief Justice of England*," did not know of this law? And, yet, if he did know of it, what are we to think of him as a *Judge*? When the people set up a laugh at SHEPHERD—(Let us call him by his plain name: such men are entitled to no ceremony, no courtesy)—when the people set up a laugh at his reading the ludicrous Litany, he attempted to *work upon the feelings* of the Jury, by exclaiming:—"What indecency! What disrespect to the Court: an *English Court of Justice*! If we are *not to be governed by law*: if the *social bonds* of society are to be *burst asunder by the clamour of a rabble*, the Court may as well *discontinue its proceedings*." Very nice cant, but all in vain! The day for such cant was gone by. The people knew very well how to reverence an *English Court of Justice*: but, they knew also very well, that these courts were no longer courts of *protection*. Very pretty, indeed, to ask, whether we were *not to be governed by law*, when he himself and the Judge also had recently assisted in *depriving the whole nation* (except the Members of Parliament) of the *protection of the law*! One would have thought, that a very small portion of sense would have prevented him from making use of such words. Are the *dungeoned men* governed by law? Was I, and were the venders of my wri-

tings, governed by *law*? Was little *Do-good* governed by *law*?—West Oliver, Castles, Reynolds, and Fletcher of Lancashire appointed by *law*? Was the conduct and pecuniary deeds of Melville, Pitt, Joseph Hunt, Cunnery, Steel and hundreds of others dealt with according to *law*? Was Napoleon, a *prisoner of war*, transported for life according to *law*? Are *Aliens* put at the sole will and command of the ministers according to *law*? Was it law that authorized Castlereagh and his associates to *sell seats* in the House of Commons? These, master Shepherd, are the things which the people think of. They would have as much respect as formerly for *English Courts of Justice*; but, they can no longer see those Courts. They see Mr. Benbow, Mr. Knight, Mr. Ward, and hundreds of innocent men, imprisoned and otherwise punished, and they see *no redress* for them in these Courts. They see the Judges *always* charging *for guilty*, when the Ministry are the prosecutors. They see “the Chief Justice of *England*” one of those very Ministers who order those prosecutions. And, it is under such circumstances, that *Shepherd* attempts to move the *feelings* of a sensible Jury by canting about the clamour of the people, and about “an *English Court of Justice*”? When the suffering people of Lancashire met, in a peaceable and orderly manner, to agree on petitions to the parliament, they were attacked, while deliberating, by a detachment of soldiers, and were driven by hundreds into jails and jail yards. The perpetrators of these acts of violence were applauded and rewarded by the government; and yet *SHEPHERD* is modest enough to ask, whether we are not to be *governed by law*!

And this, too, merely because the people *laughed* at his baffled endeavours to complete the ruin of a meritorious man and his family!

The people knew well, for Mr. HONE had most ably proved it, that he was not prosecuted from any regard which his prosecutors had for *morality* or *religion*. He most judiciously brought forward the cases of *Canning* and *Gillray*. He stated that *Gillray* received a pension of 200 pounds a year for his *parodies*, which were really *blasphemous*, because used for the purpose of propagating *falsehood*. I knew the fact, and have several times stated it. I knew, that *Canning* and *Frere* and *George Ellis* and *Wm. Gifford* and even *Pitt* himself assisted in suggesting those *parodies*. Or, at least, so *Gillray* told me. This wretch's pension was stopped by Lord Sidmouth, but it was again revived, when the Whigs went out in 1807; and he was paid it to the end of his life, which was of that *awful description* that ought to have made a deep impression on the minds of his profligate prompters and fellow-labourers. And, while the people saw *Canning* wallowing in public money, and exercising the powers of government; while they saw this, and, at the same time, saw Mr. HONE hunted to death on account of *parodies*, what were they to think of *this kind of law and government*? Oh, no! brother *SHEPHERD*! The day is passed for *imposing* on the people. Gowns and Wigs have done, and might yet do much; but, there must be something like *fair play*, or the gowns and wigs are useless. It is, indeed, a sorrowful thing, when the people condemn that which they formerly were so proud of obeying and respecting; but, the fault is not with the people.

Mr. HONE was, as all the world

saw, persecuted, not because he had *ridiculed religion*, or the *Church Service*, for he had done neither; but, because he had ridiculed *Old Bags*, *Triangle*, and the *Doctor*, and had, under the popular form of *Litanies* and *Creeds*, exposed to just hatred and contempt the robbers and oppressors of the people. This, as every body saw, was his real offence; as far as related to these publications. But, besides, he had been a most active and efficient labourer in the cause of Reform generally; and he had dealt Corruption a heavy blow in exposing the machinations of the Police-offices and the Home-office in the affair of the London riots and the Spa-fields Meetings. It was he, who got at and published the curious and black history of Dyal's Memorial, John Gifford's communication of it to Sidmouth, and Sidmouth's communication of it to the *Courier*. This publication had the greatest good effect. It was the clue to all Sidmouth's Plots, and it tended greatly to save the lives of the innocent men in London, whose lives had been bargained for by Castles. It was Mr. HONE, who communicated to me the proofs of the distribution of the "*Romsey Register*" by the government, as stated in the "*New Year's Gift to George Rose*." Mr. HONE's fidelity to his promise prevented me from publishing proof of the *Police office* having put forth hand bills, with "*Hunt Regent and Cobbett King*" printed on them. His humanity towards his informer induced him to resist all temptations to make this fact public; though, if it had been made public, the consequences must have been very injurious to the enemies of us all.

The original sin of Mr. HONE was his humane and disinterested exertions in favour of that unfortunate girl, ELIZA FENNING,

whose death, as well as all the circumstances of her trial and execution, the people of London will long remember. If she had been his own child, he could not have laboured more earnestly than he did to preserve her life, and the taking away of which life Mr. HONE will yet, I trust, live to see a subject of most serious inquiry.—Another of his capital crimes was, his publishing a detailed list of the Noble and other *Boroughmongers*, and proving that it was they who really had the whole of the government of the kingdom in their hands.—This crime was committed under the form of *Letters by Major Cartwright*.—There are other crimes of the same sort, which, I hope, Mr. HONE will commit; for, I trust, that he will not suppose, that *any thing*, which he can do, short of becoming a hireling of the *Boroughmongers* (which I am convinced he will not) will ever work his forgiveness. There will be, because there can be, no cessation of the fight against these usurpers, until they shall have been compelled to do the nation justice, by vacating their usurped power.—Why did not Brother SHEPHERD prosecute the List of borough-usurpations? Why, because, that was a matter, which it was inconvenient to stir. That was to be kept *out of sight*, if possible. Impossible! It must and will be constantly before the people. They will see, and they do see, in all these prosecutions for pretended *sedition* and *blasphemy*, nothing but attempts to crush men for their endeavours to expose and abate the borough-tyranny. This is the real offence of the prosecuted men, and this appears to be well known now to the *juries*. It was Mr. HONE's zeal, his industry, (and his talent too) in assailing our *political* foes; and not his *irreligious* conduct, that

brought upon him the vindictive persecutions of the borough-mongers. And, that there might remain no doubt of this, SHEPHERD said not a word about the *Seditious* count in his Informations! He could not have done that, without exposing himself to Mr. HONE's answer: and this he was afraid of. What, indeed, to the plain sense of an honest jury, can be *too hard* to say of those men, who have robbed and enslaved the country? What can any man say too hard of such people as Canning, Sidmouth and Castlereagh? Canning who sacked fourteen thousand pounds a year at Lisbon; Castlereagh who sold a seat; and Sidmouth who goes about with two or three hundred dungeon-keys fastened to his girdle! This "*mild and gentle*" being should be represented as the keeper of the keys of death. And, is he *never to answer*? Is he never to render an account of the bodies that he has seized and shut up? Are men to be ruined and killed for speaking against his acts? Three honest Juries have told him, that men are not to be killed for this; but, I shall not be surprized to hear, that Corruption has resolved to dispense with juries. A friend, in England, observes to me, that he thinks she will take the decision of her complaints "*wholly into her own hands*, and then," says he, "*she has not much further to move.*" I agree with him perfectly: and, indeed, I was of this opinion long ago. As long, or as far, as she can *pack*, she may make shift to destroy by the *forms of law*; but, this will not be very long; and the hatred of her will be everlasting. The COUNTESS says, that the Duke of Devonshire (who owes his present title and great part of his estates to the part which his ancestor took in *making a Revolution*) has turned out of his farms and houses not only *all Reformers*,

but all *Relations of Reformers*! And yet, this is one of Mr. PERRY's famous **OPPOSITION**! This is one of those "*natural leaders*", to whom Mr. PERRY would have the people look for *advice and support*! Mr. GREY, now Earl Grey, when he presented a petition for Reform, in 1798, stated that this Duke put *four members* into the Commons, or People's House! Very well, my Lord Duke! All that we have to do is, I hope, to *remember* this! I hope we shall not forget it. As far as Corruption can *pack up* juries of *tenants*, she may get on. But, she will not get on in *London*; and, without that, she cannot do much with juries. So that, before it be long, she will, I think, make her *last move*; that is to say, will lay juries aside in all cases where the Government is the prosecutor, and which are almost the *only* cases where juries are wanted to protect the property and lives of the people. Will Shepherd then talk of our being "*governed by law*"? Will he then say, that the time for *resistance* is not come? Perhaps he may. But, surely, he will not then complain, that the people *laugh* at the idea of an "*English court of Justice*".

As Mr. HONE had occasion to speak of the *Parody of Mr. Reeves*, who was the Chairman of the "*Loyal Association against Republicans and Levellers*:" that is to say, against the Reformers of 1794, it was a wonder, that he forgot, when he came to speak of **INTENTION**, the Judge's *gentle charge* on a trial of Mr. REEVES for a *libel* on the *Revolution*. Upon Mr. HONE's trial, the Judge and the Attorney General broadly and decidedly averred, that it was **NOT** the **INTENTION**, but the **TENDENCY**, of the publication, that the jury ought to look at: and, that, if they found the **TENDENCY** bad, they must convict Mr. HONE.

Now, what said KENYON, when Mr. REEVES was prosecuted, *not by the government*, but by order of the House of Commons, to which prosecution the Minister consented, in order to silence the clamours of the Opposition? What said mild and gentle and humane Kenyon upon *that occasion*? Why this he said: "That in order to find the defendant guilty, they must be *satisfied* of the **EVIL INTENTION** of the defendant: the *quo animo* was the question to be tried." He said, "they were to find, whether their consciences were *satisfied*, that the *motive laid in the Information was the motive that influenced the defendant in the publication*: In judging of the matter alledged, they were to judge of the *motives* with which the defendant published it. That was not to be HIS decision, but it was for the decision of the jury." He added: "that it should be remembered, that all Law and especially the *criminal law*, should be *administered in mercy*: for the king, by his coronation oath, was bound to administer Law in *mercy*."—So, you see, when this *Loyal* Chairman was prosecuted, the **INTENTION** was **EVERY THING**: but, in Mr. HONE's case; in this Reformer's case, the intention was to be **NOTHING**, and the **TENDENCY** every thing!

Mr. HONE's trial and his meritorious conduct will be long remembered. They will, in better times, be ranked along with those of William Penn, Stephen Bushell, Bingley, Lilburn, Prynne, Bastwick, Burton, and the rest of the brave men, who have resisted tyranny's favourite weapon; and it is no small credit to the nation and no small terror to the Robbers and Corruptors and Murderers, that so high a spirit has been shewn in his behalf. But, Mr. HONE has to thank *himself*,

and the nation have to thank *him*, for this victory over Corruption, arrayed in her most deadly armour, armed with her prison and her hidden dagger. This is an excellent lesson for those whom the impudent high-blooded gentry call the "*lower orders*." It will, one would hope, teach the "*lower orders*" to rely on *themselves*; and not suffer themselves to be made the sport of men, who would continue to bandy them about for their own selfish purposes. Where were those great patriots, Mr. Brougham and Sir Samuel Romilly, upon this occasion? It was beneath their dignity, I suppose, to step forward in defence of this oppressed gentleman. The former, with all his humanity for the *Negroes*, and the latter with all his humanity for the *French Protestants*, could, however, refrain from tendering their talents upon this important occasion, when an Englishman and his family were about to be ground to death!—"Oh! nobody could expect them to offer their services." And, why not? Why not expect them to offer their services in defence of poor Brandreth, too, who was assigned over to Counsel chosen by those who were pursuing his life? They are ready enough to offer their services as *Members of Parliament*. Quite ready for that. But, I do hope, that the people, where they have any voice left, will now see, that, if ever they recover their liberties and rights, they must rely no longer on such men; but must place their reliance solely on *themselves*; that is to say, on *one another*. They must get over all their follies about "*great men*," men "*of family*," and "*gentlemen of England*," as Sir Francis Burdett calls them; or they must make up their minds to die slaves. The People, and you, the Electors of Westminster, must get rid of this childish and slavish way of thinking, or, no-

thing good can come out of elections. Mr. Hone relied upon *himself*, and that saved him. You must do the same; or, even your voices will be of no avail.

I shall not presume to offer you any advice as to any *particular persons*; but, I beg leave to express my anxious hope, that you will seek for *deeds* and not for *words*. You have had enough of the latter to satisfy any reasonable men. The express test, which ought to be put to every candidate is much about as follows:

1. Will you *move for leave to bring in a bill* for a Reform of the Commons' House of Parliament, upon the principles of annual elections and of universal suffrage, including soldiers and sailors?
2. Will you *move for a repeal* of the Corn Bill?
3. Will you move for a legal accusation of the Employers of Oliver and Castles?
4. Will you *do your utmost* to obtain justice on all those who have, in any way, oppressed the people; though under colour of Acts of Parliament? Will you actually move their impeachment?
5. Will you stand by the people, and never on any account *desert* them? Will you go as far as you call on the people to go?
6. Will you *visit and console* and *assist*, to the utmost of your power, all persons who are, or shall be, imprisoned by arbitrary means: and will you attend punctually to the complaints of all persons, who complain to you, verbally or in writing, of the oppressions of the government; will you make known the complaints and demand redress in all cases, where redress ought to be had?

7. Will you be *diligent and resolute* in the discharge of your duty as our representative?

8. Will you move an *impeachment* of any one, whom you can prove to have *sold a seat* in parliament?

9. Will you obey our *future instructions*; or *resign your seat*?

Will any man pretend, that this is *too much* for a Member to be, or to do? Why, then, not insist on it? It is nonsense to talk of *confiding*. Does not every man, in his own affairs, stipulate as to the things which are to be *done* by those whom he trusts with his affairs? I am willing to *confide* in one to obey *my will*, to do what I *wish* to be done; but, not to *confide* in any one to *will and wish for me*. This would be confiding to a pretty pass!

Electors of Westminster, you, who have made such a noble stand against Corruption, it remains for you yet to do much. It is in vain to think of any good from mere *talkers*. What we want are *doing* men. Men who speak of what flimsy flashy men will not. Men who will make *common cause with the people*. As to *lawyers*, the thought is madness. Mr. Hone could find not one worthy to trust with his defence. Would they, then, be worthy of your choice? The means of choosing your own Members are safely in your own hands; and it is in your own power to send two men who will make Corruption shake on her throne.

That you will thus act is the sincere and anxious hope of him, who, present or absent, never can forget the matchless public spirit of the people of Westminster, and who shall always be proud to reflect that he has so often been a fellow-labourer with you.

WM. COBBETT.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

Printed and Published by and for Wm. Jackson, No. 11, Newcastle Street, and 192, Strand, London.